

Cross-Cultural Customer Satisfaction at a Chinese Restaurant: The Implications to China Foodservice Marketing

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Increasingly, Americans are consuming the cuisine of other cultures. Is this an indication that globalization is having an effect on our eating habits? Are Americans embracing and savoring multiculturalism? This study examines the factors (e.g., reliability, assurance, empathy, cultural awareness, cultural atmosphere, responsiveness, control, etc.) contributing to customer satisfaction in an ethnic restaurant. The results reaffirm the notions that reliability and value are the primary indicators of customer satisfaction. Moreover the findings from this study do not confirm some previous studies that cultural awareness of ethnic food has positive effects on customer satisfaction, an issue that needs more explorations. The findings are used to make suggestions to the China food marketers as how to effectively satisfy foreign travelers for their food consumption when they are in China.

INTRODUCTION

Since the very beginning of human history, food has assembled peoples in the way that not any other things have been able to do. No matter it was the ancient agora or today's modern day supermarket or restaurant, the market of food has always played a central role in human's lives, communities, communication, and culture (Huddleston et al., 2009; DeJesus and Tian, 2004). Culture is often defined as a system of values as well as a determinant of consumer behavior. Members of a particular culture transform their experiences with their physical and social environments to an abstract level of belief about what is desirable and what is not (Lillis and Tian 2010). Such encoded beliefs, called values, act as a general guide for everyday behaviors, including those pertaining to buying and consumption. Cultural values differ among nations along Hofstede's four dimensions of national character (Emery and Tian, 2003; Hofstede, 1984; Tian, 2002). The growing amount of international business has increased the need to understand consumer behavior from a cross-cultural perspective (Mooij, 2004; Senguder, 2001; Sunderland and Denny, 2007; Tian 2002 a). A number of satisfaction models have been accepted by

researchers and practitioners, but these models explain the phenomenon at the individual level, independent of the cultural environment of the consumers (Oliver, 1997; Senguder, 2007).

The objective of all marketing efforts is to maximize customer satisfaction (Rust et al., 2004). If for the marketers to satisfy the customers with the same cultural background is not that easy, then to satisfy the customers with different cultural background, which we termed as cross-cultural customer satisfaction, will be even more difficult. According to existing research, valued benefits have impact on satisfaction responses following consumption. Therefore, satisfaction is the function of the congruency between perceived performance and valued benefits derived from consumer personal values, and the formation of consumer values is influenced by central cultural values (Senguder, 2007; Westbrook and Reilly, 1983).

Consumer satisfaction is important to the marketer because it is a determinant of repeat sales and consumer loyalty. Satisfaction is also important to the individual consumer because it reflects a positive outcome from the fulfillment of unmet needs. Customer satisfaction is an important determinant of post-purchase attitude and product choice. The growing amount of international business has increased the need to understand customer satisfaction from a global or cross-cultural perspective (Choi and Mattila, 2006; Katherine et al., 2001; Senguder, 2007; Spreng et al., 1996). Generally, when Americans think about the influence of globalization on consumer behavior, they think it in terms of the United States' influence on the consumerism of other cultures. The reverse, however, may also be true (Tian, 2002 a, b).

Interestingly, over the last two decades, the popularity of ethnic restaurants has grown faster than any other category in the U.S. (Panitz, 2000; Pillsbury, 1998, Silverstein, 2009). Furthermore, this increase seems to directly parallel the increase in overseas trade. On the other hand, the fast growth of China economy as well as China becomes more open to the world, the number of foreign visitors to China is increased to a new high record of almost 55 million tourist visit it annually, which apparently stimulates the foodservice market in China. The purpose of this paper is to examine the factors (cultural and otherwise) contributing to the customer satisfaction of new and repeat customers at ethnic restaurants. It probes the factors that are influencing customer satisfaction any different for an ethnic restaurant than for an American restaurant. Thus to answer the question: does cultural authenticity or cultural familiarity influence customer satisfaction? In so doing the authors aimed at providing some useful suggestions to China foodservice marketers in general and to the Chinese restaurant industry in particular as how to satisfy foreign travelers' food consumption when they are traveling in China.

THEORETICAL ISSUES AND HYPOTHESES

Customer satisfaction is commonly defined as the organization's ability to meet or exceed customer expectations. Research conducted by Parasuraman et al. (1988) suggests that customer service expectations can be categorized into five overall dimensions: reliability, tangibles, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Specifically, reliability is the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. Tangibles are the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communications material. Responsiveness is the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service. Assurance is the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence. Lastly, empathy is the caring, individualized attention provided to the customer.

Additionally, it is important to note that the reliability of service outcomes is the most important dimensions in meeting customer expectations. This is particularly true in the restaurant

business. The quality (e.g., aesthetic appearance, aroma, temperature, and taste) of the food is the primary reason for visiting the restaurant (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2009). The process dimensions (assurance, responsiveness, and empathy), however, are the most important in exceeding expectations (Ziethaml et al., 1990). Note, the lack of influence that tangibles have as satisfiers or delighters on customer satisfaction. This is particularly surprising since customers experience the service within the environment of the service facility. Therefore, we believe that:

H₁: Of the various service and cultural dimensions, service reliability will have the largest effect on customer satisfaction.

H₂: The atmosphere of the restaurant (e.g., décor and music) will not have a significant effect on customer satisfaction.

Bateson (1985) suggests that the dynamics or control of the service encounter play a significant role in customer satisfaction. Every service encounter involves an interaction between a customer and a service provider; each has a role to play in an environment staged by the service organization. Furthermore, management has an interest in delivering service as efficiently as possible to protect their margins and remain competitive. These rules and procedures tend to limit the extent of service provided for the customer and the resulting lack of customization that might result in an unsatisfied customer. Additionally, the interaction between contact personnel and the customer has the element of perceived control by both parties. The contact people want to control the behavior of the customer to make their own work more manageable and less stressful; at the same time, the customer is attempting to gain control of the service encounter to derive the most benefit from it. In short, the more control that a customer has over the service; the more the customer is likely to be satisfied. This might be particularly true in situations when a customer is in a foreign environment. Consequently, we expect that:

H₃: The customer's desire for control will have a significant effect on customer satisfaction.

Why do customers choose one service over another---restaurant A over restaurant B? Cost, one may answer. Ambiance or any of several other good reasons are also viable answers. The bottom line, however, may be culture, because the underlying culture helps to determine the value that customers place on the service (Schwartz and Davis, 1981). In other words, when an American customer repeatedly chooses an ethnic restaurant, he or she may have a more positive perception of the restaurant associated with its culture, which may contribute to the value of the service. As such, we anticipate that:

H₄: The customer's perception of the restaurant's culture will have a significant and positive correlation with customer satisfaction.

Additionally, the work of Hofstede (1984) on cultural dimensions may have some effect on whether an individual is willing to take part in a cross-cultural experience. Specifically, Hofstede suggests that countries (e.g., the United States) with a relatively low sense of uncertainty avoidance are more apt to seek out new experiences and to be more tolerant of differences. Further, Bennis et al. (1973) suggest that the more one becomes aware of a foreign culture; the more one is likely to enjoy the culture. Therefore, we imagine that:

H₅: The customer's level of understanding of the ethnic food culture will have a significant and positive correlation with customer satisfaction.

THE STUDY AND METHOD

In order to get a sense of whether other ethnic food cultures influence the U.S. food culture, the authors wanted to select an ethnic culture that was the most dissimilar to that of the U.S. As such, the authors used the Hofstede (1984) dimensions as a guide, and also used a list of the available ethnic restaurants in the city to select one that is most suitable for our study. The area is relatively more diversified in terms of ethnicity and the population is more concentrated than in many other small cities in the U. S. Among many different ethnic restaurants we determined that this particular Chinese restaurant would be the most suitable for our study because it is located in the center of the city and can be easily accessed from all directions. Moreover, we ourselves are regular visitors of this restaurant and have established "guangxi" (social network) with the owners and the service staff. Additionally, we wanted to select a restaurant that had high volume for lunch and evening meals in order to capture statistics on both types of clientele. Further, we wanted to select a geographic area that was rapidly increasing its dependence on world trade.

The site selected was a Chinese buffet style restaurant in a city of approximately 100,000 residents along one of the major interstate highway corridor. The corridor, in general, and this area specifically, is considered by many authorities as one of the country's most rapidly increasing areas in terms of generating foreign revenue. The restaurant is located next to a major shopping mall, in a commercial complex on a heavily traveled four-lane street. There is a commercial plaza across the street with several American style restaurants and fast food services. Additionally, there are two other Chinese restaurants within two miles. A third Chinese restaurant one-half mile away recently went out of business.

The parking lot can accommodate 85 cars and the restaurant is designed to have a serving capacity of 180 customers at a time. There are five seating areas, among which, one is designated as a smoking area with 40 seats. The restaurant is nicely decorated with a beautiful waterfall screen between the waiting area and the eating areas and two large pictures of Hong Kong and the Great Wall in the two main dining rooms. The four buffet bars are next to the kitchen and between the two dining rooms. There is an excellent variety of foods consisting of 4 variations of rice, 15 steamed or fried dishes, 16 fried entrees, 18 vegetable entrees, and 18 deserts and soups. All entrees on each bar are even numbered according to the Chinese cultural value of *hao shi cheng shuang* (good things are in pairs).

Based on authors' observation, the consumers and their consumption behaviors at this restaurant vary from lunches to dinners, from weekdays to weekends. Generally, the consumers for weekday lunches are mainly working adults and drivers; the consumer for weekday dinners are families, mainly husbands and wives; the consumers for weekend dinners and lunches are mainly families, most with children. It is observed that the consumers for Sunday lunch are mainly extended families with grandparents, parents, and children after their church activities (See Table 1 for detailed information about consumers' structure).

There is a manager and a hostess to control the cash register and the waiting area and seven waiters/waitresses and one busboy to handle the dining areas. Except for the manager, hostess and a few servers, the majority of the employees are unable to freely communicate with the customers in English. The service persons are all from Mainland China. They do not get paid

from the owners but are tipped by the customers. They work six days a week and long hours per day. The owners provide them with accommodations, including food and shelter. On the other hand, the owners clearly understand the importance of the cook in a Chinese restaurant; the owners pay the cook very well compared with what they pay the other employees and with what other Chinese restaurants pay their cooks. Overall, the manager says the restaurant serves approximately 3,500 customers a week and makes a nice profit despite their relatively low prices.

TABLE 1
OBSERVED CONSUMER STRUCTURES IN VARIOUS TIMES OF A WEEK

Items	WK day Lunch	WK day Dinner	WK end Lunch	WK end Dinner
Dates of observation (days)	May 25 (Thu.)	May 23 (Tue.)	May 28 (Sun.)	May 26 (Fri.)
Times of observation*	12:30 p.m.	6:15 p.m.	1:15 p.m.	6:00 p.m.
Consumers (smoking)	33	6	8	17
Males	23	3	4	8
Females	8	3	4	7
Children	2	0	0	2
Consumers (non-smoking)	97	47	113	63
Males	62	23	45	30
Females	31	21	51	24
Children	4	3	17	9

* Times when the observer arrived at the restaurant.

Three instruments were developed for the purpose of this study. The first instrument was a 20-item, five-point Likert scale questionnaire developed by operationalizing each of the proposed factors affecting customer satisfaction. This questionnaire was given to a random sample of 72 lunch and 88 evening patrons. The second instrument was a seven-question open-ended interview sheet that focused on the issues of cultural awareness, the atmosphere, and reasons for choosing this restaurant. These interviews were given to a random sample of 25 daytime and 32 evening customers. Lastly, a five-item, five-point Likert scale cultural awareness survey was developed and distributed to 100 customers and 100 community members. In all, the data collection process covered a five-week period and was conducted by the authors and eight undergraduate student workers.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The first, second and third hypotheses were tested using a stepwise regression analysis of the following variables: reliability, assurance, responsiveness, empathy, tangibles, cultural familiarity, cultural atmosphere, and customer control. Separate analyses were performed on the lunch

and dinner customers. Both results supported the first hypothesis, which suggested that reliability would be the most dominant variable influencing customer satisfaction (lunch adjusted $R^2 = 0.324$; $p < .01$; dinner $R^2 = 0.356$, $p < .01$). Other factors with adjusted R-squares above 0.05 were responsiveness (lunch adj. $R^2 = 0.181$, $p < .01$; dinner $R^2 = 0.153$, $p < .01$) and customer control (lunch adj. $R^2 = 0.233$, $p < .01$; dinner $R^2 = 0.211$, $p < .01$). None of the other variables had levels of significance less than .05. On this basis, one can see that both the second and third hypotheses were also supported. The atmosphere did not have a significant effect on customer satisfaction ($p < .05$) and customer control did have a significant and meaningful effect on customer satisfaction.

The fourth and fifth hypotheses were tested using a correlation analyses. The fourth hypothesis, which suggested that customer satisfaction would be correlated with a customer's perception of the organization's culture, was generally supported ($r = .63$, $p < .01$). The fifth hypothesis, which posited that customer satisfaction would be correlated with a customer's understanding of the ethnic food culture, was not supported ($r = .18$, $p > .05$). This finding conflicts with findings in previous studies (DeJesus and Tian, 2004, Pillsbury 1998, Tian 2001), and therefore more careful studies are necessary. On the other hand, although not hypothesized, there was a strong and significant correlation ($r = .63$, $p < .01$) between a community member's knowledge of China/Chinese culture and their frequency of eating in Chinese restaurants.

Ninety percent of the lunch hour customers and 78% during the dinner hour customers were repeat patrons; mean values of repeat visits were 12.3 and 7.2 for the noon and evening meal respectively. Incidentally, there was a strong correlation between the number of repeat visits and the customer's belief that they were recognized by the manager and/or hostess ($r = .73$, $p < .01$). Of the first time customers, 70% of the daytime and 67% of the nighttime customers said that they would be back. Only 11% of the customers perceived the food to be authentic Chinese. However, of the customers who perceived that the food wasn't authentic Chinese, only 5% cared. The other 95% did not seem to mind. Also, the four top reasons that customers indicated as reasons for their intent to return were: (1) taste, (2) variety, (3) quantity, and (4) price. The two most common reasons for customers indicating that they "would not return again" or "probably would not return again" were: (1) they didn't find the food to their tastes (65%), and (2) they didn't like the buffet style of service delivery (23%). Further, it is interesting to note that although a relatively high percentage (45%) of customers believed that there could be miscommunication with the servers, most (82% bottom two blocks) didn't see this as a problem or as a source of dissatisfaction.

Additionally, a comparison of the results of the community survey to the customers offered some interesting insights. First, fifty-nine percent of the community members believed that an ethnic restaurant should have an authentic décor and delivery system. In contrast, less than 15% of the satisfied buffet patrons believed that the décor was authentic and none of the satisfied patrons believed the delivery system was authentic. Second, the average community member perceived that Chinese have significantly stronger work ethics (58% to 20% top two blocks) and significantly higher morals (62% to 32% top two blocks) than Americans, but they are less attentive to cleanliness (19% to 32% top two blocks). Lastly, the demographic findings indicated that the patrons were relatively evenly distributed by age, occupation (professional vs. non-professional), gender, and education level. It did seem, however, that there were not as many families with young children (ages 5-12) as might be expected in a comparable American style restaurant.

Support for the first three hypotheses gives a strong indication that the factors influencing customer satisfaction at the Chinese buffet do not differ much from those influencing customer satisfactions in a typical American restaurant. It is interesting that the atmosphere, in general, and Chinese décor, in specific, did not influence customer satisfaction. This should be noteworthy to most of the proprietors of Chinese restaurants, since they spend a good deal of money on decorations. Perhaps atmosphere in a Chinese restaurant would be classified by Hill (1989) as a “qualifier” or by Kano (1984) as a “basic need”.

TABLE 2
SUMMARY OF TESTED HYPOTHESES

Concept/Issue	Hypothesis	Finding and Interpretation
The relationship between reliability of service and customer satisfaction.	H ₁ : Of the various service and cultural dimensions, service reliability will have the largest effect on customer satisfaction.	Supported, which means that reliability would be the most dominant variable influencing customer satisfaction.
The influence of environmental factors on customer satisfaction.	H ₂ : The atmosphere of the restaurant (e.g., décor and music) will not have a significant effect on customer satisfaction.	Supported, which means that the atmosphere did not have a significant effect on customer satisfaction.
Customer’s control over the service and their satisfaction.	H ₃ : The customer’s desire for control will have a significant effect on customer satisfaction.	Supported, which means that customer control over the service has a significant and meaningful effect on their satisfaction.
The underlying culture helps to determine the value that customers place on the service.	H ₄ : The customer’s perception of the restaurant’s culture will have a significant and positive correlation with customer satisfaction.	Supported, which means that a customer satisfaction would be correlated with his or her perception of the service organizational culture.
Cultural awareness of ethnic food helps to increase customer satisfaction.	H ₅ : The customer’s level of understanding of the ethnic food culture will have a significant and positive correlation with customer satisfaction.	Not supported, which means that a customer’s satisfaction might not be correlated with his or her understanding of the ethnic food culture

On the other hand, since atmosphere would be considered by Parasuraman et al. (1991) as a process delivery dimension, it could be used an opportunity to exceed customer expectations. Additionally, it may be that as people become more familiar with China, they may appreciate efforts to improve authenticity or to receive information about China during the meal. We believe, however, that a buffet style restaurant is not a good candidate to test this proposition

since most people indicated they were there for other reasons (e.g., control, speed, quantity, sampling opportunities).

Also, it is not surprising that this restaurant was doing very well financially. A buffet style restaurant is an excellent mix of Porter's (1980) cost leadership and differentiation strategies. The buffet standardizes service delivery by imposing strict operating procedures and, thus severely limits the discretion of the contact personnel. Although personalized service is not available, customers are presented with a vast array of items to choose from. This is a particularly good strategic fit since the customers are interested in controlling time, cost and variety and the restaurant doesn't have to worry very much about the English skills of its service staff.

Further, it is important to note that the customers' sense of the restaurant's organizational culture was correlated with their level of satisfaction. This is probably an extension of Bitner's (1990) theory on the effect of attribution on satisfaction. In other word, since the customers perceived the Chinese as having a strong work ethic, they would not attribute any dissatisfying experiences as the fault of the restaurant. Also, it was surprising to note that customer satisfaction was not correlated with a customer's knowledge of the ethnic food culture (i.e., H₅). Especially since our survey of community members indicated a positive correlation between their knowledge of the Chinese culture and their frequency of eating Chinese meals.

We suspect this disparity is because there are a large number of people who like Chinese food, yet know nothing about China or the Chinese food culture. As such, we believe the effect (direct or moderating) of ethnic knowledge on customer satisfaction deserves further study. Additionally, it might be worthwhile to investigate the correlation between a person's level of uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede 1984) and their penchant for cross-cultural cuisine. Such a correlation would suggest an interesting opportunity for micromarketing. In short, however, the study simply affirms America's love for Chinese food and the buffet style of service delivery (self-service and variety). Apparently, the customers studied in this case did not expect to get a one-hour trip to China and they did not expect authentic Chinese food and that was just fine with them. The question remains, however, what are Americans or other foreign travelers in China expecting for their food consumption? How the Chinese food marketers effectively market their food and service to those foreigners who are traveling in China? In the next section we will make some of our suggestions based on this particular study.

THE IMPLICATIONS TO CHINA FOODSERVICE MARKETERS

China is a quite unique and diverse country market in various aspects including business practices, distribution and product development as well as legal systems, which differ from those of any other countries. The China food market is huge and unique as well with a great growth opportunity in the next few decades as the process of China urbanization goes and more foreign tourists travel in China (Trend Hunter World 2010). China's restaurant and catering industry is one of the most growing sectors in China since its reform and opening in the end of 1970s. The Chinese foodservice industry was valued at nearly Y 500 billion RMB (about \$70.2 billion USD) in 2006, the leading profit foodservice area was the restaurants channel. It is expected to achieve yearly average growth of 18 percent with a goal of Y 3.3 trillion RMB (about \$478 billion USD) in sales by 2013. The industry employed nearly 20 million people in 2009, with another 2 million would be added each year (Xinhua News Agency 2009). It is observed that in recent years, the Chinese domestic restaurant market has greatly changed. Not

only the changing of consumer behavior but also the customer structure, such as more and more foreigners become the customers, requires that the operators of restaurant industry to engage more accurate brand positioning and better service.

There is no doubt that the fast increase in tourism has benefited the foodservice market in China, this is particular true during 2008 Olympic Games time in the summer of 2008. China has become a major tourist destination following its reform and opening to the world in the late 1970s instigated by Deng Xiaoping. In 1978, China received about 230,000 international foreign tourists, mostly because of the severe limitations that the government placed on who was allowed to visit the country and who was not. In 2006 China received 49.6 million international visitors, making it the fourth most-visited country in the world. In 2007 international tourist arrivals to China increased to 54.7 million, and the foreign exchange income was about \$42 billion USD. According to the WTO in 2020, China will become the largest tourist country and the fourth largest for overseas travel (China National Tourist Office homepage).

Although the main purpose of foreign tourist visit China is not for enjoying the Chinese food culture, it is true that to provide a variety of good food choices and services will be definitely helpful to increase the satisfaction of foreign tourists when they travelling in China and thus will be helpful to attract more foreign tourist travelers in the future. The foreign tourist visitors differ from the origins (see Table 3) and thus they must have different food cultures from that of Chinese food culture. It is important and necessary for the food marketers to understand and familiarize themselves with some major foreign food cultures and to customize their food and service to their foreign customers from different countries. It is also important that the food service managers to allow their foreign customers certain degree of self control as what type of food to be served, the buffet foodservice format might be a better choice for most foreign foodservice consumers.

TABLE 3
FOREIGN VISITOR ARRIVALS IN 2009

NATIONALITY	TOTAL (10,000 Person)	Age					Sex	
		Under 14	Age 15-24	Age 25-44	Age 45-64	Over 65	Male	Female
ASIA	1,377.93	49.76	102.91	653.58	488.77	82.90	923.59	454.34
AMERICA	249.12	19.00	17.68	85.05	106.02	21.37	158.99	90.13
EUROPE	459.12	17.33	44.86	213.46	163.93	19.54	275.87	183.25
OCEANIA	67.24	5.26	4.32	25.74	27.30	4.63	41.50	25.74
AFRICA	40.12	0.70	2.12	26.35	10.45	0.50	30.07	10.04
OTHERS	0.22	0.01	0.01	0.11	0.09	0.01	0.13	0.09
TOTAL	2,193.75	92.05	171.90	1,004.28	796.56	128.95	1,430.15	763.60

Source: China National Tourist Office Homepage http://www.cnto.org/chinastats_2009ArrivalsByPurpose.asp

It is also suggested that the foodservice marketers in China should learn to effectively educate their foreign customers by providing them the basic information about the Chinese food cultures, demonstrating the proper way that the Chinese food being served, so that their foreign customers

will be able to format their positive perceptions about Chinese food they are served. Finally but not lastly, it is very important that the foodservice marketers in China to train their service staff to effectively communicate and serve their foreign customers. The previous studies conducted by the scholars (such as Tian 2001) demonstrate that effective communications between customers and service staff at any restaurant will play an important role to get customers satisfied and to retain the customers' loyalty, therefore it is suggested that the Chinese foodservice leadership should realize the importance of foreign language training to the foodservice employees.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION FOR THE FUTURE STUDY

Cultural factors play an important role in consumer food consumption and satisfaction. Satisfaction is vital to individual consumers because it reflects a positive outcome from the fulfillment of unmet needs such as eat food when feel hungry. To marketers, especially to the service marketers, such as restaurant operators, customer satisfaction is a very significant because it is a determinant of customer loyalty. Various factors influence customer satisfaction in foodservice sector, such as the reliability of the service, customer control over the service, customer cultural awareness of the service organizational culture, and ethnic food culture (a factor that previous studies have confirmed). It is important that ethnic restaurant operators to educate their customers have a better understanding about their service organizational cultures and their ethnic food culture as well.

Most consumers are aware of the differences between the Chinese food cultures and the American food cultures but need to know more about how and why they differ from one another. The study treats the consumers as the cultural participants but it needs more probes as to how the consumers behave themselves at various situations. The relationship between consumers and employees is not analyzed because of the limitations of the data, although it is suggested that the employees have much influence on consumer behaviors.

The growing amount of international visitors to China in recent years has increased the need to understand customer satisfaction from a cross-cultural perspective by the foodservice marketers in China. In order to create competitive advantages, cross-cultural customer satisfaction should be systematically studied by the Chinese foodservice marketers. It is highly recommended that the foodservice marketers in China should have a better understanding of the determinants of satisfaction responses of their foreign customers.

Future research will investigate the consumer behavior of food and service consumption in more detail and will include a survey of the foodservice employees. Particular areas of interest are how consumers define food cultures; the extent to which consumers are knowledgeable of Chinese food culture and what element consumers identify as the most important factors that cause them to behave differently in such an ethnic restaurant, if there is any difference. The authors are also interested in finding out how the foodservice providers, in this case the Chinese foodservice marketers, understand the differences between their own food cultures and other people's food cultures from an inside-out perspective. Moreover, it is important to find out the cross-cultural factors and their affects on consumers' food consumption and satisfaction.

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